

Channing Tatum's '10 Years' Resuscitates High School For 50 Worthwhile Minutes

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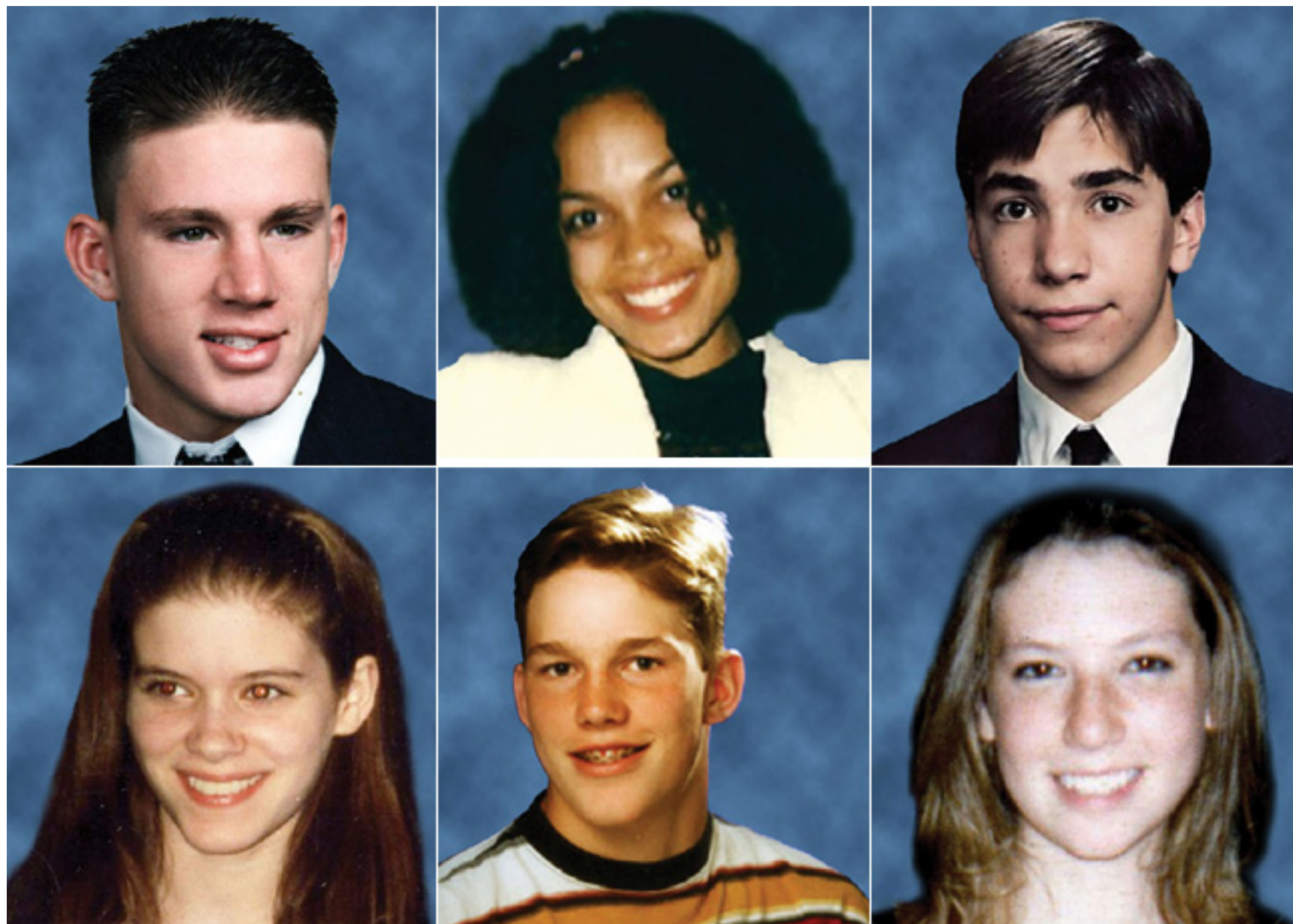
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Rating: **2.5/5.0**

CHICAGO – “10 Years” unintentionally backfires by proving that a real-life Hollywood couple – Channing Tatum and his actual spouse of three years Jenna Dewan-Tatum – has less on-screen chemistry than two actors who’ve practically never met.

Attempting to capitalize on everything we loved, hated and have certainly never forgotten about high school, “10 Years” is a somewhat effective blast to the past that mixes the seemingly authentic moments of various intersecting characters with forced attempts at overly obvious Hollywood screenwriting.



From top left to lower right, “10 Years” high school pictures:
Channing Tatum, Rosario Dawson, Justin Long, Kate Mara, Chris Pratt and Ari Graynor.

Image credit: Anchor Bay Films

Exploiting nostalgia as its primary sales tool and Channing Tatum as its linchpin casting credit, I watched the progression of some of the characters and their stories indifferently. For others, my life would have been improved without them and the film would have benefited by

cutting the bloat they added to the project.

But there was **one** and only one bewitching story – with actual enchantment and intrigue – that I felt like I *had* to watch. It wasn't co-leads Channing Tatum (Jake) and Rosario Dawson (Mary). Their characters have moved on to other people since a flame that lasted throughout high school. And it wasn't even Jake with his real-life wife Jenna Dewan-Tatum (Jess), who played his current lover.



Jenna Dewan-Tatum (left) and Channing Tatum in "10 Years".

Image credit: Colleen Hayes, Anchor Bay Films

Instead, anyone attempting courtship should have emulated the romance between Kate Mara (Elise) and Oscar Isaac (Reeves). Their backstory was never even realized and, of course, is propelled with titillation because its undertone is infidelity. They're the only two you actually root for in this film and grow to care about – all while their affair is the most unethical of all.

I'm frequently critical of on-screen chemistry because so often it feels acted and disingenuous. Reeves and Elise feel like they were given a script and direction, but they burned it and simply actually fell in love. Unfortunately, this can't be said about the rest of the film's characters, whose themes predictably revolve around similar excavations of past love and current testing to see if any sparks remain.

One interesting and actually unexpected twist comes from "John Carter" star Lynn Collins (Anna). She's just at the high school reunion hoping to relive her "glow" of yesteryear before having to go back to feeling sorry for herself in single momdom.



Kate Mara (left) and Oscar Isaac in "10 Years".

Image credit: Colleen Hayes, Anchor Bay Films

Successful bachelor Justin Long (Marty) and unhappily married Max Minghella (AJ) – who tries to vicariously live through his single friend by helping him score high school's most-wanted triumph – admittedly intersect Anna's secret pity party in an overly scripted and forced way.

Yes, of course, so often do we try to bag high school's hottest chick 10 years later, fail to, follow her home to litter her house in toilet paper and then end up making late-night dinner with her kids you never knew existed. That happens just as often as politicians telling the truth.

Written and directed by Hollywood newbie Jamie Linden – who wrote "Dear John," which also starred Channing Tatum with Amanda Seyfried – and produced by Channing Tatum and the producers of Tatum's "Magic Mike," the DNA of this decently cast ensemble film has Channing Tatum in it, on it and everywhere between.



Justin Long (left) and Max Minghella in "10 Years".

Image credit: Colleen Hayes, Anchor Bay Films

While the film is billed as a comedy, drama and romance, it's going for too much across too many genres when it can't even master any one of them. In truth, "10 Years" is a drama under the guise of a film that lacks nearly any comedy and only grazes the surface of a romance.

Chris Pratt (Cully) is scripted in as comic relief, but these days, we need more than just getting blasted, stripping down to a wife beater and singing god-awful karaoke. If that's all it takes to be funny today, we'd have enough comedy from Britney Spears. But alas, Cully's somewhat funny but mostly not character reveals the most disappointing role in the film from one of Hollywood's most talented new stars: Ari Graynor.

Following "Mystic River," "Nick and Norah's Infinite Playlist" and then "The Sitter," we finally see and enjoy the talented chops she has in her co-leading role in 2012's "For a Good Time, Call..." (where she also served as executive producer).



Channing Tatum (left) and Rosario Dawson star in "10 Years".

Image credit: Colleen Hayes, Anchor Bay Films

But transitioning from that spicy, vulgar and actually comedic role to this vomitus version of one is a career regression. In “10 Years,” she’s the plain June Cleaver wifey of a guy she’s always apologizing for who has to babysit her loose-cannon husband as much as her kids.

When not trying to and failing at making you giggle, that’s when this film finds some honesty and has moments at tearing at your heartstrings. “10 Years” is like an elementary-school version of Lawrence Kasdan’s Oscar-nominated comedy/drama “The Big Chill”. That 1983 film, which stars Tom Berenger and Glenn Close, timelessly stands up as one of the best reunion films in recent decades.

“10 Years,” which opened on Sept. 21, 2012 in Chicago from Anchor Bay Entertainment and the producers of “Magic Mike,” stars Channing Tatum, Rosario Dawson, Chris Pratt, Jenna Dewan-Tatum, Justin Long, Max Minghella, Oscar Isaac, Ari Graynor, Daniel Scott Lumpkin Jr., Lily Lumpkin, Scott Porter, Eiko Nijo, Mike Miller, Brian Geraghty, Aubrey Plaza and Kelly Noonan from writer and director Jamie Linden. The film, which has a running time of 100 minutes, is rated “PG-13” for language, alcohol abuse, some sexual material and drug use.



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